

Preliminary Minutes
Rental Registry
September 28, 2022
Howard Barton Jr. Conference Room

Members Present:

Eric Alden, Vice Chair (via phone)

Noah Schmidt

Ryan Silvestri

Peter Kolenda

Penny Trick

Members Absent:

Rose Goings

Charlie Rimer

Justin Hyjek, Chair

Scott Baitz

Others Present:

Lance Lichtensteiger

Shawn Cunningham (Chester Telegraph)

Rebekah Ferreira (OVTV)

1. Eric called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm
2. Eric asked if we had approved the meeting minutes from August 24th.
3. Eric had send edits to Justin about said minutes.
4. The committee had not seen these changes.

5. Pete made a motion to table the minutes from 8/24 until the entire committee had a chance to review them.
6. Penny seconded.
7. The motion passed unanimously.
8. Penny made a motion to pass the meeting minutes from 8/29
9. Ryan seconded.
10. The committee approved the minutes from 8/29 unanimously.
11. Eric wasn't happy with the GOV OS initial communication but after a follow up he was able to get their VP of Operations who expressed more interest in working together.
12. Ryan agrees that it would be good to get more bids from other companies.
13. Eric will followup with GOV OS for a detailed bid and startup package similar to what Granicus put together.
14. Pete had a question around the Granicus updated quote. It included the 26K annual fee but was lacking the startup cost that was originally discussed. Was that an error or did they wave that fee? He also wanted to know if that cost includes billing along with identification.
15. Ryan said that they can do whatever we want but as he understands it billing is a separate module with additional costs.
16. Pete would like to know what it would cost to add billing and mailings to the Granicus service.
17. Ryan said everything right now is just preliminary and we won't know the exact number until it is formally sent out to bid.
18. Noah asked what everyone thinks the Selectboard is looking for.
19. Ryan thinks they want more information but is unsure exactly what to give them.
20. Pete thinks we should have a ballpark number for what the entire package will look like.
21. Ryan proposed the idea of being revenue equal with fees compared to cost of the service. He believes that the town will have to carry some costs in the first few years until we reach a high level of compliance.
22. Penny believes we should be careful with the fee cost being too high because it is hard to back that down once it is established. She thinks the fee should be reasonable.

23. Eric asked if it would be helpful for the Selectboard if we presented information as if the project was moving forward. Here is what we think it would cost and a flow chart to help them understand how we see things moving forward. Perhaps some bullet points outlining the next steps needed.
24. Noah thinks the Select Board handled the ball back to the committee and are looking to us to define the goals and next steps.
25. Eric agrees and believes they are asking for more than this committee was originally tasked with. If we don't present something to that effect then we will receive the same answer back.
26. Penny agrees with including the safety checklist and would like Justin to get a more concrete number from Granicus.
27. Ryan said we also need the numbers for additional modules such as billing.
28. Penny asked if we should add other town registries to the Select Board packet. Along with how their programs are going to run.
29. The committee doesn't think that is necessary, they are looking for a simple proposal, ideally on one page, paired with the information sheet.
30. Penny asked how we are going to educate property owners and inform them of the registry.
31. Pete believes a mailing would be the best way to achieve this. Ryan said that is around 2,900 owners, excluding undeveloped land.
32. Ryan proposed a \$300 annual registration fee. He thinks this number allows the registry to get off its feet and is within the Granicus recommended fee range that gave us. He believes it would be hard to go from \$150 to \$300 but a little easier to go from \$300 to \$150 if need be.
33. Eric thinks we should ask Granicus for a chart on how municipalities typically get started with registries, he thinks they might have a chart that could help the Select Board visualize the process.
34. Noah proposed that as things move forward a new committee be suggested to continue the efforts that this committee started.
35. Ryan said that's another committee and we should try to keep things simple and let the Select Board decide how they want to manage things later on.
36. Eric mentioned a housing study that the planning commission is working on.
37. Ryan, a member of the planning commission brought us up to speed. The planning commission voted to move forward with a grant that would provide funds for a housing study in Ludlow to look at housing needs. They are waiting for Select Board approval.

38. Ryan circled back for what we need from the Select Board meeting Monday is to create a one-page document for the Select Board to review. Ryan asked if the board was comfortable with the \$300 annual fee.
39. Noah did.
40. Eric thinks that number is high.
41. Ryan said he got that number based on compliance numbers and the average rental rate provided to us by Granicus. Ryan said the first year of compliance is less than 30% based on information provided to us by Granicus.
42. Eric said, based on that figure the town would still generate 67K the first year.
43. Penny said people will do that math and want to know where that money is going.
44. Ryan sees the real cost of this program costing more than 67K when you factor in other modules like billing and the town resources devoted to it. He also sees any surplus going toward safety, like the fire department and ambulance.
45. Noah agrees with the idea of having a plan for surplus and thinks life safety is the perfect place for surplus to go. The ambulance and fire department have been topics brought up in recent years and is directly tied to what the registry's goals are.
46. Pete thinks we need to have a better idea of the cost of implementing a registry before we arbitrarily assign a fee number.
47. Eric thinks we can get pretty close numbers from those companies.
48. Ryan sees two schools of thought. Generating some revenue for safety or something else or attempting to be cost neutral.
49. Noah proposed adding those two ideas to the one page document.
50. Eric thinks Justin is working well with Granicuys and he is working well with GOV OS. He thinks they should try to some starting points that these companies have for implementing a registry. Eric was also going to reach out to VSTRA to see what they have, they are working on putting together some information for towns who are looking at STR regulation.
51. Penny asked who was going top put this together.
52. Eric said he will work with Justin to put their info together.
53. Eric said if we aren't ready for the Select Board then we aren't ready.
54. Pete asked about postponing and Penny agreed.

55. Ryan proposed asking for a clear direction for where we should head and what exactly they are looking for.
56. Ryan suggested we see what we can come up with and ask for feedback and a clearer direction.
57. Public Comments: Shawn Cunningham from the Chester Telegraph asked if this is being seen as a Zoning bylaw or town ordinance.
58. Ryan said we were asked if a registry was needed in Ludlow and we are deciding whether we need one and what the next steps would be.
59. Sawn asked if we are including noncompliance penalties.
60. Penny said we haven't looked at that yet.
61. Penny proposed a follow-up meeting for October 12.
62. The committee agreed that October 12 would work.
63. Pete made a motion to adjourn
64. Penny Seconded.
65. The committee adjourned at 6:21pm

Respectfully submitted, Noah Schmidt